

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application and the rejection of claims 1-12 are respectfully requested. Applicant has attempted to address every objection in the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment of September 21, 2005 (Paper No. 2005) and the Office Action of June 1, 2005 (Paper No. 20050528). The amendment filed July 5, 2005 was considered to be non-compliant, under 37 C.F.R. § 1.121, because the status identifier for claims 10-12 were incorrect. Applicant has changed the status identifier for claims 10-12 from "currently amended" to "withdrawn-currently amended" to reflect the election with traverse of claims 1-9 in response to the restriction requirement dated June 1, 2005.

Next, responding to the Examiner's comments, Applicant has further amended claim 10 to emphasize that the apparatus of claim 10 is configured for practicing the water softening method of claim 1. Claim 10 now recites in the body the language "the first state, the second state, and the third state," to refer to the method recited in the preamble to underscore the interrelationship between the apparatus of claim 10 and the method recited in claim 1. The microprocessor of the apparatus is specifically programmed to perform the various actions of the claimed method such as: aiding in determining if the impedance difference is one of the first state, the second state and the third state, determining whether a maximum rinse time determined by the timer has been reached, determining whether an upper preset time limit was reached, and triggering an alarm signal for alerting the user that a valid regeneration did not occur. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the method of

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Reply to Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment of September 21, 2005

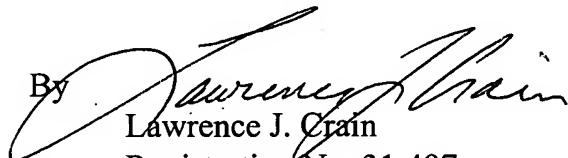
claim 1 is not distinct from the apparatus of claim 10 because the microprocessor of the apparatus is specifically configured to perform the claimed method.

In the event the Examiner maintains the requirement, Applicant elects claims 1-9 (Group I) with traverse.

Applicant submits that in view of the above-identified amendments and remarks, all of the issues raised in the Official Action of June 1, 2005 and the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment dated September 21, 2005 have been addressed. Should the Examiner discover there are remaining issues which may be resolved by a telephone interview, he is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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